

# The Parable Of The Sower

## (Matthew 13:3-23; Mark 4:3-25; Luke 8:5-18)

*by Bryan Gibson*

In this parable Jesus tells of a sower who scatters seed (the word of God—Luke 8:11) in four different places (representing four different kinds of hearts). Some is sown on the wayside, some on stony ground, some among thorns, and some on good ground. Jesus explains what each represents.

**Wayside:** Those who hear the word of God, but do not understand (Matthew 13:19; Mark 4:15; Luke 8:12).

**Stony ground:** Those who receive the word with joy, but have no root. In time of temptation, persecution, tribulation, etc., they fall away (Matthew 13:20-21; Mark 4:16-17; Luke 8:13).

**Thorns:** Those who receive the word, but never grow to maturity. The word is choked out by the cares, riches, and pleasures of this life (Matthew 13:22; Mark 4:19; Luke 8:14).

**Good ground:** Those who hear the word of God, understand it, and keep on bearing fruit (Matthew 13:23; Mark 4:20; Luke 8:15).

Let's look now at some practical lessons we can learn from this parable.

**There cannot be a harvest without the sowing of seed.** To reap a harvest of souls among our friends, neighbors, and family members, we must first plant God's word within their hearts. It is only by hearing and obeying the word of God that they can be saved (1 Peter 1:22-25). One of our hymns asks the question, "Will your sheaves be many, will you garner any, for the gathering at the harvest home?" What kind of harvest can you expect? How much seed have you been planting?

**The devil does not want that seed to bear fruit, and will do everything in his power to prevent it.** He may use temptations (Luke 8:13), persecutions and tribulations (Mark 4:16), or he may just dangle the things of this world in front of us (Mark 4:17-18). His tricks are many. Are we prepared to resist his efforts? Have we put on the whole armor of God, so that we might be able to withstand his attacks? (Ephesians 6:10-20).

**It is important to prepare our hearts properly to receive God's word.** Four different hearts are pictured in this parable, but only one of them was acceptable. Do I have the kind of heart in which God's word can flourish? Have I prepared my heart, as Ezra did? (Ezra 7:9-10). Have I rooted out those things that might choke God's word? (James 1:19-21; 1 Peter 2:1-3).

**We must respond to the word of God with conviction as well as emotion.** We don't want to be like those who received it with joy, but in time of temptation fell away. To remain steadfast in the gospel, we must have conviction. We must wholeheartedly believe the truths contained in the gospel.

**Love of this life and the things of this life can keep us from eternal life.** Isn't this what happened with the rich young ruler? (Luke 18:18-23). According to this parable, the word can be choked out by the cares of this life, the deceitfulness of riches, the pleasures of life, and the desire for other things (Matt. 13:22; Mark 4:19; Luke 8:14). We need to be reminded of the truth found in 1 John 2:17: "The world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever."